



Chesterfield County Office of Water Quality



What are those tubes in the field?

Fast Enviro-Fact No. 3—Tree Tubes

Have you wondered what are those plastic tubes you see in the field by the boat dock? They are actually the beginnings of a new forest. Inside all those tubes are native hardwood trees planted by volunteers during the winter of 2003.

Tree tubes are an important step in planting small hardwood trees. The tubes provide protection against animals that find the young tender trees appealing for browse. Also, the tubes serve as a mini greenhouse to help increase tree growth. Finally, the tubes help us locate the trees



for management such as when cutting grass. The tubes will be removed in a few years when the trees are about 2 inches in diameter. You might also notice a black mat at the base of the tube. This black mat lets water into the soil, but reduces the growth of grass and weeds, which compete with the young trees.

This field was selected to re-establish a Resource Protection Area (RPA). Resource Protection Areas, also known as riparian buffers, are the corridors of environmentally sensitive land alongside or near the shorelines of streams, rivers and other waterways. RPAs filter pollutants from stormwater runoff, reduce the volume of runoff, prevent erosion and perform other important biological and ecological functions. The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act protects natural RPAs in Chesterfield County.

For more information about Resource Protection Areas, please contact Joan Salvati of the Chesterfield County Office of Water Quality at 751-4665.